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ABSTRACT

This practicum used a weekly tutorial program to improve students' written expression using precision teaching as a monitoring tool. Remedial children were referred for instruction by teachers, school psychologists, or parents. The practicum was based on the students' needs for a program strengthening writing mechanics and reading comprehension skills. Task sheets (assignment sheets), timings of individual skills pinpointed, charts of progress made and evaluation of learning promoted self-monitoring and self-motivation. Critical thinking skills and appropriate learning strategies were implemented. Techniques using visual prompts, graphic organizers, and pre/post writing activities were stressed. Results showed that students' written expression and reading comprehension improved using precision teaching as a monitoring tool. Students also demonstrated increased proficiency in problem-solving skills and demonstrated critical thinking and writing abilities. (Five tables of data are included; 11 appendixes, including graphs of student data, charts of individual progress, samples of writing, and samples of learning techniques used, are attached. (Author/SR)

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IMPROVING INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS' CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS
USING PRECISION TEACHING AS A MONITORING TOOL

by

LINDA HERTLER

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A Practicum Report

submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of Education at Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.

The abstract of this report may be placed in a National Database System for reference.

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ABSTRACT

Improving Intermediate Students' Creative Writing Skills Using Precision Teaching As A Monitoring Tool.

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Improving intermediate students' written expression using precision teaching as a monitoring tool was implemented in a weekly tutorial program. Remedial children were referred for instruction by teachers, school psychologists, or parents. The practicum was based upon the students' needs for a program strengthening writing mechanics and reading comprehension skills. Task sheets (assignment sheets), timings of individual skills pinpointed, charts of progress made and evaluation of learning promoted self-monitoring and self-motivation. Critical thinking skills and appropriate learning strategies were implemented. Techniques including visual prompts, graphic organizers, and pre/post writing activities were stressed. The results indicated increased learning using Precision Teaching as a monitoring tool. Students demonstrated an increased proficiency in problem-solving skills and demonstrated critical thinking and writing abilities. Appendices include graphs of student data, charts of individual progress, samples of writing, and samples of learning techniques used.

AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

Linda Hertler
Linda Hertler

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CHAPTER I

Purpose

Functional illiteracy is the inability of an individual to use reading, writing, or math skills in everyday life. Many major agencies and programs that focus on the problem have estimated the number at more than 27 million. Illiteracy connects to many problems, ranging from poverty to poor family relationships, and to the simple inability to fill out a request form or a job application.

A basic goal of American education is the advancement of literacy. Reading comprehension is an active, participatory process of the mind (Lapp and Flood, 1983). The reader classifies, generalizes, outlines, summarizes, and synthesizes information (Lapp and Flood, 1983). It is important for students to understand what is read. Reading comprehension is a measurement of learning. Students are assessed by their level of mastery of state and national reading and writing skills. One way to test reading skills is through creative writing. Children's mental development is increased by using the basic skills of recalling, understanding, applying, analyzing, and evaluating ideas. Creative writing allows the mind to find alternative ways to arrange the puzzle of the numerous components that make up our existence. The students can

create and recreate new patterns of reality-perception. Writing involves inventing, devising, selecting, eliminating, and arranging ideas (Lapp and Flood, 1983). Proofreading and editing are also part of the writing process. Writing teaches critical thinking. This researcher's goal was to improve intermediate students' writing using Precision Teaching as a monitoring tool.

Background

At a private university setting, remedial children were referred for instruction by teachers, school psychologists, or parents. The researcher's role was to plan an academic program for 16 weeks. The students met twice a week.

Student Anna, presented as an interested, creative, and cooperative seventh grader attending public school. The language arts teacher shared that Anna would benefit from a program strengthening writing mechanics and reading comprehension. Anna was tested and was found to have low scores in the reading comprehension areas of sequencing, skimming for main ideas, and inferencing skills. The results of the Springfield Interest Finder indicated an enjoyment of writing. Anna became motivated to succeed when given praise and encouragement. Baseline data scores are revealed in Tables 1 and 2.

Student Danny, presented as an athletic, enthusiastic, and cooperative sixth grader attending public school. The parents of

the student reported that the reading scores on standardized tests had progressively declined. The reading teacher reported that the student had low scores in comprehension and vocabulary skills. Danny was placed in a remedial reading group at school. The language arts teacher reported that the student scored low on spelling tests. The student also showed poor grammar skills in writing ability. It was decided that Danny would benefit from practicing the mechanics of writing and expanding thinking with creative writing skills. The student had a short attention span. Baseline data is collected in the following tables:

Table 1

Baseline Collection For Reading Comprehension

=====

Student	Skill	Pretest		Criteria For Mastery
		Correct	Errors	
Anna	Sequencing Level D	3	5	10
Anna	Skimming For Main Idea Level E	3	2	5
Danny	Main Idea Level E	1	3	5
Danny	Drawing Conclusions Level F	4	0	5

=====

Table 2
Baseline Collection For Written Expression

Student	Skill	Pretest		Criteria For Mastery
		Correct	Errors	
Anna	Paragraph			
	Punctuation	7	2	10
	Spelling	30	11	80
	Ideation	+3		+12
Danny	Paragraph			
	Punctuation	3		10
	Spelling	48		80
	Ideation	+4		+12

The researcher's objectives were as follows:

1. Given a picture or story starter, the students will be able to write a cohesive paragraph. The paragraph will include a topic sentence, relevant details, and a conclusion at a rate of seven sentences in a five-minute period.
2. Given a picture or story starter, the student will be able to write a cohesive paragraph consisting of 10-12 appropriately placed punctuation marks in a five-minute time period.
3. Given a picture or story starter, the student will be able to write a cohesive paragraph consisting of 80-100 words spelled correctly in a five-minute time period.

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategy

Precision Teaching

Improving intermediate students' writing using Precision Teaching as a monitoring tool was the practicum goal. Dr. Ogden Lindsley developed the principles of Precision Teaching at the University of Kansas in the mid 1960's. Dr. Lindsley applied principles of operant conditioning to the management of instruction in special and regular classes. "Precision Teaching (PT) is a procedure to measure learning and proficiency of skills. It is a direct, daily measure using rate or frequency of response" (A Resource Manual for the Development and Evaluation of Special Programs For Exceptional Students, 1988:4). Precision Teaching includes a time factor. It measures tasks completed correctly within set time limits. Precision Teaching (PT) implements the following five steps: "pinpointing" a behavior, counting and recording the frequency of the behavior during a specified time, setting aims for each skill pinpointed, charting the responses, and evaluating the students' learning (A Resource Manual for the Development and Evaluation of Special Programs For Exceptional Students, 1988).

A task sheet is an invaluable tool used in Precision Teaching. It is an individually planned list of skills and enabling activities for each student to complete during the session. A task sheet provides clarity of instruction, curriculum, planning, and a list of materials used for various skill areas. Task sheets also provide data for record keeping and parent conferences. Parent conferences are beneficial for the student, parents, and teachers. Parents can effectively relay insights and information to and from the classroom teacher and the researcher. The structured organization of the task sheet enables the teacher to target and address the types of errors made. The teacher can make more efficient use of instructional time. Task sheets also increase motivation. Students choose the order of the daily exercises (Obrand, 1985). This visual prompt increases productivity as students work to complete the list of activities. Students develop responsibility, independence, and pride in accomplishment (Obrand, 1985).

The benefits of the Precision Teaching methods have been substantiated in Orange County. Scores from the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills were compared between classes using Precision Teaching methods and classes using traditional methods. The reading results are seen in the following test chart (A Resource Manual for the Development and Evaluation of Special Programs For Exceptional Students, 1988:2):

Table 3
Elementary #2

Reading 4th Grade	Mean Standard Score Gain
Group 1, Non PT	45
Group 2, Non PT	41
Group 3, PT	76
Group 4, PT	56

The increased scores shown in the chart indicate the positive effects Precision Teaching can have on learning. Thomas C. Lovitt ascertains in the journal article "Notes on Behavior Modification" that studies published in the Journal of Precision Teaching illustrate that students learn well by activity, encouragement of creative writing, and inner thought (Lovitt, 1983).

Pre-writing

The positive effects of creativity instruction can also be seen in a study of 49 learning disabled intermediate students. The Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking scores revealed that the experimental group made significantly higher scores than the control group on the creative thinking variables on the written expression subtests (Jaben, 1983).

Pre-writing and revising strategies were implemented with the target group. One method involved having the writers ask questions about their own papers. This promoted commitment to the revising and proofreading process. Using the Peer Questioning Proofreading Process (PQP), the students ask peers the following: What do you like about my paper? What questions do you have about my paper? What kinds of polishing does my paper need?

Learning Strategies

Teaching problem solving skills and self-monitoring skills are goals of most academic curriculums. Learning strategies include techniques and principles used to aid a student to independently solve problems and complete tasks. The learning strategies approach developed by Dr. Gordon Alley and Dr. Deschler at the University of Kansas offers a student the means to become an independent learner. Exercises are provided to enhance the ability to acquire, integrate, store, and retrieve information. "Learning strategy instruction focuses on both how to learn and how to effectively use what has been learned" (Obrand, 1985:67). According to Deschler, as cited by Obrand (1985:67), there are three instructional strands. The Acquisition Strand enables the student "to gather information from written material such as textbooks, novels, and technical manuals." The Storage Strand helps a student "to organize, store, and retrieve information." The Expression and Demonstration of Competence Strand

enables a student "to complete tasks, to effectively express themselves in writing, and to take tests. Students are taught to master task-specific learning strategies through structured practice." These strategies are incorporated in the Precision Teaching methods.

R.A.P. - Reading comprehension is vital to success. Language expression entails putting thoughts together, eliciting full sentences, retelling stories in own words, and vocabulary development. The acronym R.A.P. is a learning strategy that strengthens paraphrasing skills and reading comprehension. The acronym R.A.P. stands for the procedure of reading paragraphs, asking questions about what was read, and putting responses in the words of the student.

C.O.P.S. - Written expression involves the skills of mechanics/ideation. These include: writing in sentences, using appropriate vocabulary, staying on the topic, building and concluding the topic, and following spelling and punctuation rules. The self-monitoring learning strategy C.O.P.S. stands for detecting errors in Capitalizing, Overall appearance, Punctuation, and Spelling. Donald B. Dersher and Jean B. Schumaker, as cited by Obrand (1985), developed the techniques at the Institute for Research in Learning Disabilities at the University of Kansas.

Sensory Methods

Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic techniques aid learning. The use of key cards and utilizing the teaching techniques of Association English are ways to focus on problem solving skills and a self-monitoring system. Key cards provide visual prompts to remember a concept and can be presented through pictures, characteristics of concept, classification, or color-coding. Visualization of grammatical terms provides a memory boost. Visualization of syntax is reinforced by manipulation and color-coding to help understand relationships (Obrand, 1985).

Brainstorming

Improving students' writing using Precision Teaching as a monitoring tool incorporates improving the quality of student thinking. Lorton (1989) suggests that students have a clear purpose and a planned sequence of activities to accomplish goals. Lorton suggests that students can become conscious of their own thinking process by having them work in pairs rather than in large groups. In this way, all students have an opportunity to verbalize their thinking. To trigger imagination and to stretch responses, visual prompts, graphic organizers, story beginnings, and creative thinking starters are used in the pre-writing exercise of brainstorming. In brainstorming there are no right or wrong answers. Immediate responses to a stimulus generates many different items, objects, or

feelings. Analogies are made, and a natural outgrowth of an analogy is metaphor in writing. This process of modeling, practicing, and creating helps to achieve the higher levels of thinking and writing (Weyhe, 1988).

Visual Prompts

Educators in Denver, Colorado, used the idea of the visual prompt by using the newspaper to promote both reading and writing. Colorado schools were emphasizing critical thinking and writing in the classrooms. The International Reading Association and the American Newspaper Publishers Association cosponsored the celebration of Newspaper in Education Week, March 7-11, 1988. A 30-page booklet, which included multilevel lesson plans so that elementary and high school students could participate, was created by two reading specialists. The visual prompts of comic strips were used to teach and reinforce the reading/writing skills of cause and effect, sequencing ideas, writing main ideas/topics, and drawing conclusions. The newspaper was also used as a prompt for students to "talk back" to newspapers through letters to the editor, free lance columns, and reactions to an article with an idea for another story. Students read, brainstormed, and talked about ideas, then wrote on their own. The visual model or prompt effectively stimulated ideas for writing and erased the fear of writing (Scott, 1988).

Graphic Organizers

Another method to help get material across to students is the use of the graphic organizer. It is a visual diagram that helps to identify and classify the major relationships of concepts, objectives, and vocabulary of the lesson. Some popular graphic organizers include the venn diagram for comparison and contrast, webbing for exploring relationships among concepts and generating ideas, and the herringbone for visualizing main ideas and details. Graphic organizers have proven to be effective tools for thinking and writing by helping teachers and students to represent abstract information in concrete form, to show the relationships among facts and concepts, to aid in organizing and elaborating ideas, and to relate new information with prior knowledge (Bettendorf, 1989).

Reisinger (1991) uses graphic organizers to nurture the student's ability to think creatively, critically, and to use problem solving skills. Reisinger uses prompts in a communication-based activity entitled "Do Your Own Thing." Creativity is encouraged through mapping responses to creative questions such as: What else? What if? Can you show it? Can you fake it?

Critical Thinking

In focusing on problem solving skills and self-monitoring, students may focus on critical thinking skills or metacognition. Study sheets, schedules of time, or task sheets help students focus

on how they came up with their answers. It is thinking that is focused on deciding what to say or do. Students may ask how they came up with their answers. They are thinking about how people think. Critical thinking is the process of pondering and logically deciding what to believe or do (Costa, 1988).

Students employing critical thinking skills will be advocates of persistence: persevering when the solution to a problem is not immediately apparent. The following list of intelligent behaviors was taken from a workshop by Art Costa (1988) entitled "Teaching for Intelligent Behavior." The list includes critical thinking behaviors that apply problem solving skills and self-monitoring skills used in improving students' writing using precision teaching as a monitoring tool. These are:

1. Student increases use of alternative strategies of problem solving and is willing to try many strategies.
2. In problem solving, student knows ways to begin, what steps must be taken, and what data are needed to be generated or collected.
3. In decreasing impulsivity, students will consider consequences of actions before beginning a task, will gather information, and reflect on an answer before giving it. Students will make sure directions are clear before beginning a task and will listen to alternative points of view.
4. While demonstrating understanding, students can empathize with an idea or feeling by paraphrasing. The student is able to

attend to another person and demonstrate understanding by building upon the idea, clarifying it, or giving an example of it.

5. The student demonstrates a flexibility in thinking. Students consider, express, or paraphrase another's point of view or rationale. When making decisions, student uses words like "however," and "if you look at it another way." Students working in groups often resolve conflicts through compromise, express willingness to experiment with other's ideas, and strive for consensus.
6. Student employs an awareness of thinking. Student can describe what goes on in the head when thinking. Student can describe what is known, what needs to be known, and a plan of action for solving a problem. Students can list the steps and know where they are in the sequence of a problem solving strategy. Students can correctly apply cognitive vocabulary to describe thinking skills and strategies.
7. In checking for accuracy and precision, student grows more conscientious about precision, clarity, and perfection. Student reviews rules, models, and vision followed in doing an assignment (task sheet). Student is able to confirm that finished product matches criteria for solving the problem. Student takes pride in accomplishment.

8. In questioning and problem solving, the atmosphere of the classroom is such that the students feel safe in asking questions. Students ask questions and find problems to solve for themselves. Students will provide supportive evidence for ideas, elaborate, clarify, and operationally define terminology. Students' written expressions will become more concise, descriptive, and coherent.
9. When using all the senses, students' sensory pathways are open, alert, and acute in absorbing more information from the environment. Student uses senses to solve problems--scrutinizing, manipulating, interviewing, visualizing, role playing, illustrating, or model building.
10. Students use creativity, ingenuity, originality, insightfulness. Student realizes that creativity can be developed. Student uses lateral thinking to examine alternate possibilities. Student can project into different roles using analogies. Student can start with a vision and work backwards. Student is willing to take risks. Student is intrinsically motivated--working for the aesthetic challenge. Student is open to criticism. Student seeks to find "a better way."
11. Students embody wonderment, inquisitiveness, curiosity, and the enjoyment of problem solving. Student gains independence from parents and teachers in solving problems. Student will appreciate the wonder of nature. Student develops an attitude

of "I Can . . . don't tell me the answer." Student will derive pleasure from thinking. Student's curiosity becomes stronger as problems become more complex.

These positive behaviors reflecting problem solving skills and self-monitoring skills relate to a positive self-concept. The skills also relate to the hierarchal levels of cognitive development modeled by B. S. Bloom. The taxonomy of thinking skills can be demonstrated through creative writing.

Precision Teaching can be used as a monitoring tool to enhance students' writing. Applying critical thinking skills and appropriate learning strategies helps to build competence and mastery of skills. The use of pre-writing activities, graphic organizers, and visual prompts promotes interest and writing proficiency.

CHAPTER III

Method

The students Anna and Danny were tested to record their baseline data. Writing samples were made by responding to a stimulus picture of their choice. This was a five-minute timing (Appendix A:38).

Instructional targets were pinpointed. The writing skills were currently in focus in the curriculums and both students showed an interest in creative writing. The skills were written on the task sheets as pinpointed activities: See Picture--Write Paragraph Story. This was conducted in a five-minute timing period. Each student used a stop watch to time the writing sample. The researcher timed the students, the students timed each other, and the students also timed themselves, recording the start and stop time. This proved to be a motivator for the students. They also enjoyed challenging each other's successes.

Individual aims are set for each skill pinpointed. An aim is an ending goal expressed as a specific frequency range. Mastery can be determined by using nationally-collected suggested performance standards, using a peer as a criteria, or using two-thirds of an adult's performance for mastery of a student. An example is think/say ideas or facts, 15-30 ideas/minute, or see/say sight words 60-80 words/minute.

Charting gives a visual picture of the progress of the student. The vertical lines of the chart are day lines. The rate of response per minute is marked on the horizontal lines. The new data is placed in the blocks at the right of the chart. The target skill (pinpoint) and level of mastery (aim) are also noted on the chart. A ● represents any behavior targeted to increase (correct responses). An X represents any behavior targeted to decrease (errors). The marks ● and X are connected except when a "no chance" day occurs, such as a weekend (Appendix B:41).

Decision making is another aspect of Precision Teaching. Charting provides a visual picture of performance so an analysis of progress can be made. Charting is done by the students and develops responsibility and independence. It monitors a student's daily progress and can serve as a motivator. Charts provide data in growth of skills and can be utilized for record keeping and for parent conferences. Decisions regarding effective methods, techniques, and materials can be made through their use.

Task sheets provide the students with a specific list of skills and enabling activities to be completed each day. Students become familiar with the materials used for each skill, and they may select the order of the daily assignments. Task sheets develop responsibility in the student and can motivate the student to increase the work speed. Task sheets allow the teacher to work

independently with each student and enables the teacher to comment on problem areas seen (Appendix C:43).

For both students, the general setting, comfort, and individual attention enhanced their learning. The pair developed a healthy sense of competition, motivated each other to complete tasks well, and became teammates in acquiring creative writing skills. Motivation was encouraged by praise and stickers. If a skill was becoming tedious, the objective was changed to completing a less number of problems. If a student dipped in a skill area, more manipulatives and drill were written on the task sheet. The technique of "Stepping Back" was used for both students when working with inference skills. They moved from a higher level book to a lower one. This alleviated frustrations and kept interest levels high. Both students especially enjoyed marking their successes. "Leaping Up" is a strategy used when a student moves up from a lower level to a higher level. Writing complex sentences rather than simple sentences is an example of this technique. Students also advanced from writing paragraphs to writing stories. This increased their motivation.

Pre-writing/Writing Techniques/Modeling

Both students modeled and practiced vocabulary skills, elaboration, organization, and structure. The students learned how stories must fit certain rules to be effective and interesting. A

dictionary and a thesaurus were supplemental materials. Students read and rated stories, practiced writing stories of their own with given story beginnings, and practiced vocabulary skills.

Anna and Danny also used visual prompts with story starters and endings to improve their writing. Self-monitoring skills were enhanced. Graphic organizers were used to convey meaning and elicit ideas. As an enabling activity, both students selected a topic such as "Perfect Pet," "Junk Food," "Skateboards," or "My Music." Students then listed their ideas in single words, phrases, or short sentences. Next, students would write a good opening sentence and a strong concluding sentence. This helped students focus clearly on the topic. At first, students wrote on personal topics that are easy to address. Then their thinking skills were stretched to encompass writing beyond themselves by discussing events and features of the world around them. Later, students applied their paragraphing skills to more difficult topics that involve observations of other people, interpersonal relationships, and respecting others' rights (Appendix D:45).

As a pre-writing enabler, Anna and Danny constructed graphic organizers following these steps:

1. The students discussed the concept of graphic organizers regarding its importance and ways in which people organize information.

2. The students discussed a specific organizer by describing its purpose. For example, a venn diagram for depicting comparison. The form of overlapping circles illustrated the concept.
 3. The students discussed and demonstrated the use of the selected organizer with familiar information and new information.
 4. The students applied the graphic organizer for a specified purpose to familiar material and to new material.
 5. The students reflected on the use of the graphic organizer by sharing examples, evaluating the effectiveness of the organizer according to the established purpose.
 6. The students were provided with multiple opportunities to practice using the technique.
 7. The students were encouraged to construct their own organizers.
- (Appendix E:47)

Clusters

Anna and Danny also used clustering as a pre-writing activity. It is described as follows: Materials, paper, and pencil.
Directions:

The students wrote a topic for writing in the center of a blank sheet of paper. The students drew a circle around the word or words. Anna and Danny concentrated on this word, and as ideas flowed into their minds about the topic, those ideas were written down randomly around the central word. The students drew a circle

around each new word and connected these new words to the center word with arrows. Students continued until they had written down all they could think about the original subject or subtopics suggested by new words. The students wrote a sentence that gave their main idea, or theses about the ideas they had on paper. Then they wrote a draft (Appendix F:49).

Sensory Methods

While improving intermediate students' written expression using Precision Teaching as a monitoring tool, Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic techniques (V.A.K.T.) were used. Both students used this visual prompt to learn and to reinforce. Visualization of grammatical terms can best be imprinted with the aid of classifying or sorting, color-coding, and picture drawing.

Anna and Danny each wrote lists of adjectives and adverbs from samples of their writing and from their assigned readers. Each word was then printed on a separate card. On the back of the card was printed the word adjective or adverb as the correct part of speech label. Next, the questions that an adjective answers were printed on a separate card. These are: Which one? What kind? How many? On the bottom of the card, the prompt about a noun or pronoun was written. The questions an adverb answers were printed on another card. These are: How? When? Where? To what extent? On the bottom of the card, the prompt about a verb, adjective, or adverb

was written (Appendix G:51). To foster the spirit of friendly competition, a game was made. One student shuffled the stack of adjective/adverb cards. The two key cards were placed in the center of the table. The student would hand the stuffed cards to the opposing student who had to sort or match each card to its appropriate label or key card on the table (Appendix H:53). A stopwatch was used by the first student to time the player for one minute. At the end of the minute, the sorted cards were checked for accuracy of placement by turning them over and matching them with the key card. The number of correct/incorrect responses was recorded. The roles of the students were then reversed and the game resumed. Demonstration was used to illustrate the rules of the game.

Games

Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic techniques were utilized by both students in the form of games. Students unscrambled jumbled sentences and placed them in the correct noun-verb-noun format. Students unscrambled misspelled words. Students placed proper prefixes and suffixes to root words. Students physically manipulated pieces to find the correct answers. The pieces were taken apart and put back together. Directions are included in the game manuals.

Anna and Danny strengthened their vocabulary and grammar skills by working through a computerized self-correcting device. A board or card was placed on the machine. Students answer the questions by putting a special "pencil" into the hole marking the correct response. A red light indicated the correct response. This was an independent activity.

Drill

Other visual prompts used as enabling activities were flash cards derived from spelling and vocabulary lists. The words were taken from the students' misspelled words in their own writing. Other words came from the glossary of their individual classroom readers. The students enjoyed comparing their progress in a one-minute timing session. The number of correct responses/incorrect responses was marked. Drills were repeated often.

Learning Strategies

The learning strategy of R.A.P. was used to write paraphrases and strengthen reading comprehension. The procedure was as follows (Appendix I:55):

R - Read two paragraphs

A - Ask yourself what you just read

P - Put it in your own words

Students were given four one-page articles on the students' grade level and 10 comprehension questions on the main points for each article.

The students read the articles one at a time. They were then given the comprehension questions. Students were not to refer back to the articles to find the answers.

In written expression, the learning strategy C.O.P.S. was developed to help students detect their errors in Capitalizing, Overall appearance, Punctuation, and Spelling. The procedure follows (Appendix J:57):

The students were given prepared paragraphs of 50 or more words containing a variety of errors. (Example: capital letters and punctuation marks omitted, misspelled words, and appearance errors). Students were given a variety of topics from which the students chose to compose paragraphs. The students circled and corrected as many errors as they could find. The students wrote a paragraph on three different topics. The students were required to scan the paragraphs for errors in their own writing.

Visual Prompts/Creative Writing

Students Anna and Danny selected and wrote from a stimulus picture. The students were timed to obtain a five-minute writing sample. The colorful, unusual, stimulating pictures made this a favorite activity. The photos were arranged in units illustrating

the parts of speech. When the students worked as a team to produce a series of short stories, turns were taken to select stimulus pictures. Turns were taken either to start a story or to end the story in a five-minute timing. On some stories, the students collaborated ideas beforehand through brainstorming. Anna and Danny clustered ideas, made graphic organizers of the story line and characters, and created a two-part story. After the stories were written, the students worked on the final phases of writing together by revising their story. Anna and Danny worked with the content of the paper first, moving ideas around, adding needed information and taking out redundant material. Next, copy editing was done. Spelling and usage were worked on. If errors were not found, the teacher pointed to the line where the error was made, and the students detected and corrected the errors. The final phase in the process of writing was Presenting and/or Publishing. Students read their stories to each other and to the teacher. As a final product, a collection of their 12 favorite stories was compiled. The students revised and copy edited the stories. Each student rewrote the stories that were written or rewrote the parts (beginning or ending) of the story that had been previously written. This demonstrated neat handwriting and preserved their identities. The students cooperatively designed a cover, wrote a table of contents, reproduced the visual prompts (pictures), organized the stories in chronological order according to the dates written, and included the

graphic organizers used. Anna, Danny, and the researcher each received a copy of the 21-page book of short stories entitled Our Book (Appendix K:59).

CHAPTER IV

Results

The results illustrated in Table 4 indicated that intermediate students' written expression was improved by using Precision Teaching as a monitoring tool. Students used an increased variety of words to express a particular thought or image. Students elaborated ideas. Related concepts followed smoothly from one to the next. Organization was adhered to in the arrangement of ideas in sequential order. Structure was prevalent in the final writings. Correct language forms were used to convey meaning. The final writings also illustrated a consistent knowledge and correct use of topic, middle, supporting, and concluding sentences.

Table 4
Results Collected For Written Expression

Student	Skill	<u>Ending Performance</u>		Criteria For Mastery
		Correct	Errors	
Anna	Paragraph			
	Punctuation	14	2	10
	Spelling	91	9	80
	Ideation	+12		+12
Danny	Paragraph			
	Punctuation	23	5	10
	Spelling	93	2	80
	Ideation	+12		+12

The results of using the tools of visual prompts, clues, graphic organizers, and brainstorming were positive. The performance of skills at the standard level of proficiency was achieved by the students. Using Precision Teaching as a monitoring tool was a productive device. Success was mirrored in the ability of the students to stay on task and to produce good writing samples.

The positive feedback element and the self-monitoring of Precision Teaching kept the students motivated and eager to excel in the various skill areas. By using the learning strategies, the students were able to generalize skills to a variety of settings and learned problem solving skills. By becoming more central in the

teaching-learning process, the students became critical thinkers and writers. Reading skills in conjunction with writing skills were improved. The results are seen in Table 5.

Table 5
Results Collected For Reading Comprehension

Student	Skill	<u>Ending Performance</u>		Criteria For Mastery
		Correct	Errors	
Anna	Sequencing Level E	10	0	10
Anna	Skimming For Main Idea Level F	5	0	5
Danny	Main Idea Level F	5	0	5
Danny	Drawing Conclusions Level G	5	0	5

The use of key cards, modeling exercises, and vocabulary/spelling/grammar drills further enhanced writing skills. Variety, exact words, and colorful expressions were elicited from the students. Grammar rules were self-monitored by using the learning strategy of C.O.P.S. Ideas were placed in correct sequential order. As students read their work they could label topic

sentences, supporting details, and conclusions. Reading skills of sequencing events, skimming for main ideas, and drawing conclusions were practiced and strengthened.

Stimulus pictures, story starters, and graphic organizers were effective methods of boosting imagination and creativity. Creative thinking "starters" were brainstormed, and developed the students' problem solving skills and self-monitoring skills. Students avidly wrote stories and were eager to read them aloud and share results. This led to writing longer stories and forming a cooperative effort or "team" writing. Healthy competition was evident in their quest to become more proficient in the writing field. Self-esteem was enhanced. Sharing, sorting, and grouping ideas stimulated imagination, and paragraphs/stories developed greater quality, style, and length.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

Progress was made in the area of improving students' writing using Precision Teaching as a monitoring tool. Writing skills and related reading skills were enhanced. Punctuation, spelling, and ideation were increased to reach standard levels of performance. Students attained problem solving skills and self-monitoring techniques.

The objectives of increasing the proficiency of students' reading and writing skills could be applied to a classroom situation. Precision Teaching techniques involving writing task sheets, pinpointing, counting and recording, setting aims, charting, and decision making could be implemented. These methods would be amenable to individuals, paired teams, or cooperative learning groups.

The methods of R.A.P. and C.O.P.S. could be implemented in a classroom situation. This would involve the students in the teaching/learning process and would teach them problem solving skills and self-monitoring techniques. The teacher would have more time to individually confer with the students.

Students could recognize improved thinking and writing skills by implementing the ideas of Benjamin Bloom. The indicators of

intellectual growth could be charted weekly by the students. Timings could be utilized in daily or weekly "journals." Students could write on a given topic for five minutes and chart the results of punctuation, spelling, and ideation. Students could also maintain a reading log where an assigned book, story, or chapter is discussed in a five-minute timed writing. The aims and pinpointed behaviors would be listed on the task sheets. Vocabulary results could be charted. Spelling tests could be timed and results charted weekly to show proficiency of skills. Students involved in a Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) program could chart results of a 20-minute reading session by determining the words per minute read.

Graphic organizers could be used in illustrating cause and effect relationships in a chapter or in a selection. They could also be helpful in finding the main idea in selected paragraphs. Students could list all the details that support the main idea.

Precision Teaching methods could be used in various reading and writing skills. In a paragraph, students could circle all the pronouns and then draw an arrow to the antecedent. The teacher could select a paragraph, cut up the sentences, and scramble them. The students would put the sentences into the correct order or sequence. In a selected paragraph, students could identify the factual statements and the opinion statements in the paragraph. Students could identify the opinion words. The teacher could pick out sentences containing content words, especially those with

context clues, and delete the words. Students would have to fill in the words in the sentences.

Paragraph development can be monitored by Precision Teaching. Students could be given a paragraph with an omitted topic sentence. Students would read the details and write a main idea sentence for the paragraph.

Students could be provided with a framed paragraph with blanks where certain key words were omitted. By filling in the blanks appropriately, the student will complete paragraphs that demonstrate comparison/contrast, or cause/effect relationships.

Five key words or terms from a reading assignment could be given to the students to use in a one-paragraph summary of the main ideas of the reading assignment. A topic sentence could be provided based on a reading assignment. The students would identify three or four details in the reading selection which support the topic sentence. Students would write one sentence for each detail. The result would be a four or five sentence paragraph.

Student learning can be improved using Precision Teaching as a monitoring tool. Problem solving skills and techniques of self-monitoring are employed. Practice, fluency building, and lessons are based on direct, continuous data from the students. Precision Teaching provides a measure of proficiency and a measure of learning.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
BASELINE WRITING SAMPLE (ANNA)

APPENDIX A

BASELINE WRITING SAMPLE (ANNA)

①

A fun career day

A class ~~is~~ of 3rd graders are
~~having~~ having A lesson in miming on
 career day. Right now they are all
 put in groups of 7. Each group
 is given some materials to work
 with. this group has chosen to
 be human marbals. You can tell
 what color marbal they are
 by the colored bands around
 their heads. They haven't yet
 figured out what they are going
 to do with the bean bags.

class. Intro
 class
 time.

spell 9
 2

Punct. 7/21

BASELINE WRITING SAMPLE (DANNY)

This reminds me of the place store.
 All of the good food is there.
 and I see that place is very good.
 This picture makes me happy to
 see everything. All of the food
 groups and the place. But there
 is no one can do good and well.

40
 40

(34) was

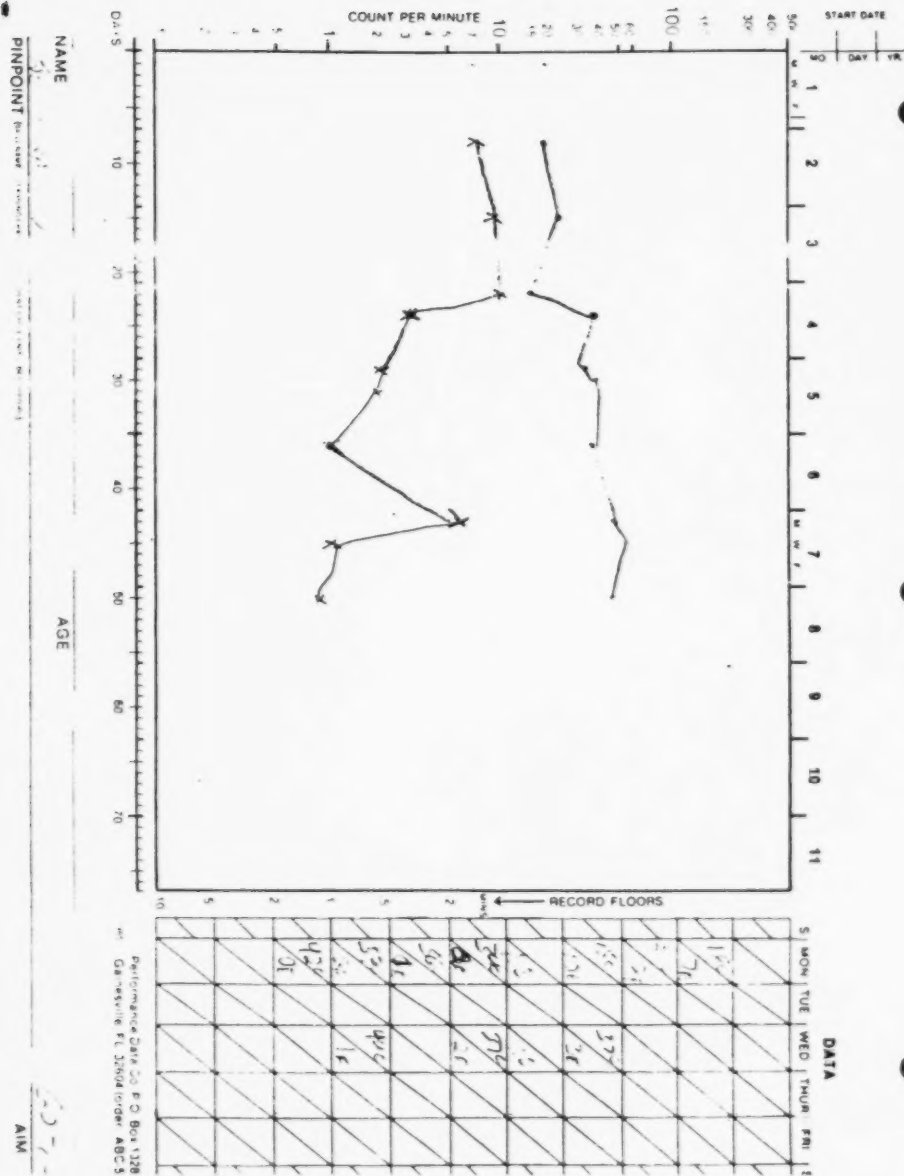
On June X

APPENDIX B

CHARTING

APPENDIX B

CHARTING



APPENDIX C

TASK SHEET

APPENDIX C

TASK SHEET



- Date 10/30 Name _____ Done _____
- 1 Do - sentences - slice top card 11/18 ☒
 - 2 * 5 minute writing (aim) 7 variations 10 pre-writing marks 50 words ☒
 - 3 NIM READING ☒
 - 4 * See - Story - READ (mouse) 8x1/2 ☒
 - 5 SPECTRA - Noting/Recalling Details 3x4 ☒
 - 6 * DRAWING conclusions 5 #5 aim: 5 sight ☒
 - 7 SPECTRA - Getting the main IDEA ☒
 - 8 * Getting the main IDEA 6 #5 aim: 5 sight ☐
 - 9 Spelling - Hear - Write - Words ☒
 - 10 * Spelling - Hear - Write - Words ☐
 - 11 PRACTICE - Say - VOCAB WORDS ☒
 - 12 * Say - VOCAB WORDS ☒



ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PRECISION TEACHING PROJECT
ORLANDO, FLORIDA

APPENDIX D
SHORT STORY

APPENDIX D

SHORT STORY

The Craft Show Creeps

It's that time of year again! It's time for the senior citizens' country crafts show.

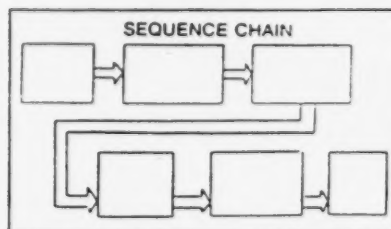
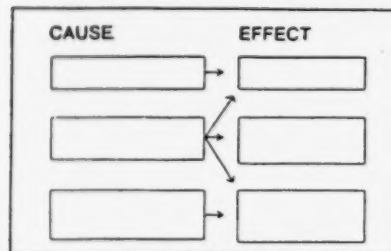
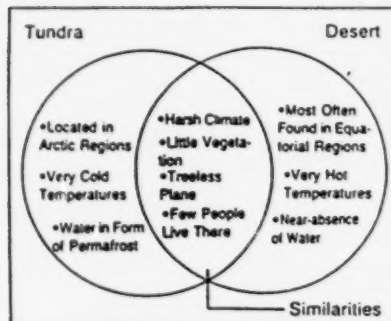
Every year since 1978 Hillary, Esther, Birtha, and Sylvia have gotten together and made a quilt. Six of those wonderful years they won. They've been friends ever since they can remember. But I wouldn't count on it....

HILLARY AND SYLVIA GOT INTO A FIGHT ABOUT WHO WOULD DO THE RED CAT. AFTER THAT, ESTHER CAME IN AND BROKE IT UP. WHILE SHE WAS DOING THIS, SHE GOT SOME HAIR PULLED OUT. THEN WHEN BIRTHA SAW THIS, SHE JUMPED INTO THE FIGHT. AFTER THE FIGHT, THE QUILT WAS ALL RIPPED UP INTO SHREDS. THEN THEY GOT INTO AN ARGUMENT ABOUT WHO RIPPED THE QUILT, AND INTO ANOTHER FIGHT. IN THE FIGHT, HILLARY DIED OF A HEART ATTACK. THEY FELT REALLY BAD.

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APPENDIX E
GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

APPENDIX E
GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS



Examples of graphic organizers: The Venn Diagram (top), Cause & Effect Relationship (middle), and Sequence of Events (bottom).

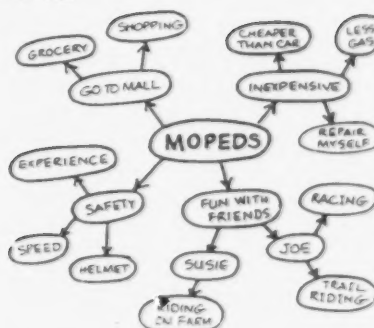
APPENDIX F

CLUSTER

APPENDIX F

CLUSTER

Figure 1
Example of a Cluster



IF A TEENAGER IS CAREFUL, MOPEDS CAN BE A SAFE, INEXPENSIVE AND EXCITING WAY TO GET AROUND.

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APPENDIX G

KEY CARDS

APPENDIX G

KEY CARDS

AN ADJECTIVE TELLS which one what kind how many ABOUT A NOUN OR PRONOUN	ADJECTIVE
--	------------------

Front

Back

AN ADVERB TELLS how when where to what extent ABOUT A VERB, ADJECTIVE, OR ADVERB	ADVERB
---	---------------

Front

Back

APPENDIX H
KEY CARDS MATCH TO SAMPLE

APPENDIX H
KEY CARDS MATCH TO SAMPLE

Key Card

Cards

ADJECTIVE

<-- Match

CLUMSY

SIMILAR

TWO

GREEN

ADVERB

<-- Match

THERE

SUDDENLY

GRACEFULLY

TOO

APPENDIX I

R.A.P.

APPENDIX I

R.A.P.

UNIT 2

1. It wasn't exactly fresh fish, but it certainly was a fresh discovery. In 1977 scientists completed eight years of examination on a fossil found in central Australia. They concluded that the fossilized bones are those of the world's earliest known fish—in fact, the earliest known backboned creature. The fish lived 480 million years ago, eighty million years before the oldest previously discovered fish. Oddly, the Australian fossil was found in 1959, yet its significance was overlooked for more than a decade.

2. The Japanese are famous for their genius in producing the diminutive. They have produced small cars, radios, and trees. Japan now has a farmer who has worked for a decade to produce tiny pigs called minipigs. This farmer's desire to go from "maxi" to "mini" was stimulated by the wide use of pigs in space control and medical research. The average adult hog weighs four hundred pounds. The minipig does not exceed sixty pounds and thus fits into capsules for space experimentation. In hospital research, it is easier to feed, house, handle, and use on a laboratory table. Each minipig costs one hundred dollars. American researchers are very interested in using minipigs.

3. Dynamic Olivia Newton John is one of America's top singing stars. She started her singing career in Australia and won a contest that gave her a trip to England. She toured with a rock group and then cut a record, "If Not for You," that was an instant hit. It became extremely popular in America, where she was asked to appear. Her music is classified as country-western, but she doesn't think of herself as a country star. She has many gold records, each selling over a million copies.

4. Astrid Lindgren of Sweden started writing stories for children when she ran out of tales to tell her own young daughter. The little girl asked her to make up a story about Pippi Longstocking, a name she invented at the moment. From this beginning, Pippi—with red hair and freckles—became world famous in books translated around the world. Mrs. Lindgren lets Pippi do anything she wants—go to bed as late as she likes, buy lots of candy, and have magical powers. Pippi has become one of the most popular little characters in children's books.

APPENDIX J

C.O.P.S.

APPENDIX J

C.O.P.S.

UNIT III: WRITTEN EXPRESSION

PART I: C.O.P.S.

Student Handout 27

Name: _____

Date: _____

- 2.0 Given an assignment, the student will demonstrate the appropriate use of the learning strategy C.O.P.S. by improving the condition of his written work.

DIRECTIONS: Rewrite the paragraph correcting all of the errors. Use C.O.P.S. to help you find the mistakes.

as a small child, curtis mayfield did not play much with other children He liked to draw colorful pictures. his mother read poetry to him. when he was nine he found an olde guitar in a closet thet happening was the start of a new life he taught himself two.play the guitar. this helped him to write music. The poetry inspired him to write words for the music. He now has been a songwriter fore over 20 years. His songs are "superfly" "pusher man" and "freddie's dead" His songs have won awards. His talent has lead him to fame and fortune. today curtis mayfield is president of his own record company

-
- 14 - capitals needed
 - 4 - commas
 - 5 - sentence endings
 - 3 - misspelled words
 - 1 - indentation
-

APPENDIX K
SAMPLE - FINAL WRITING

APPENDIX K

SAMPLE - FINAL WRITING

COVER

Authors:

Published by: Super Marks publishing
company

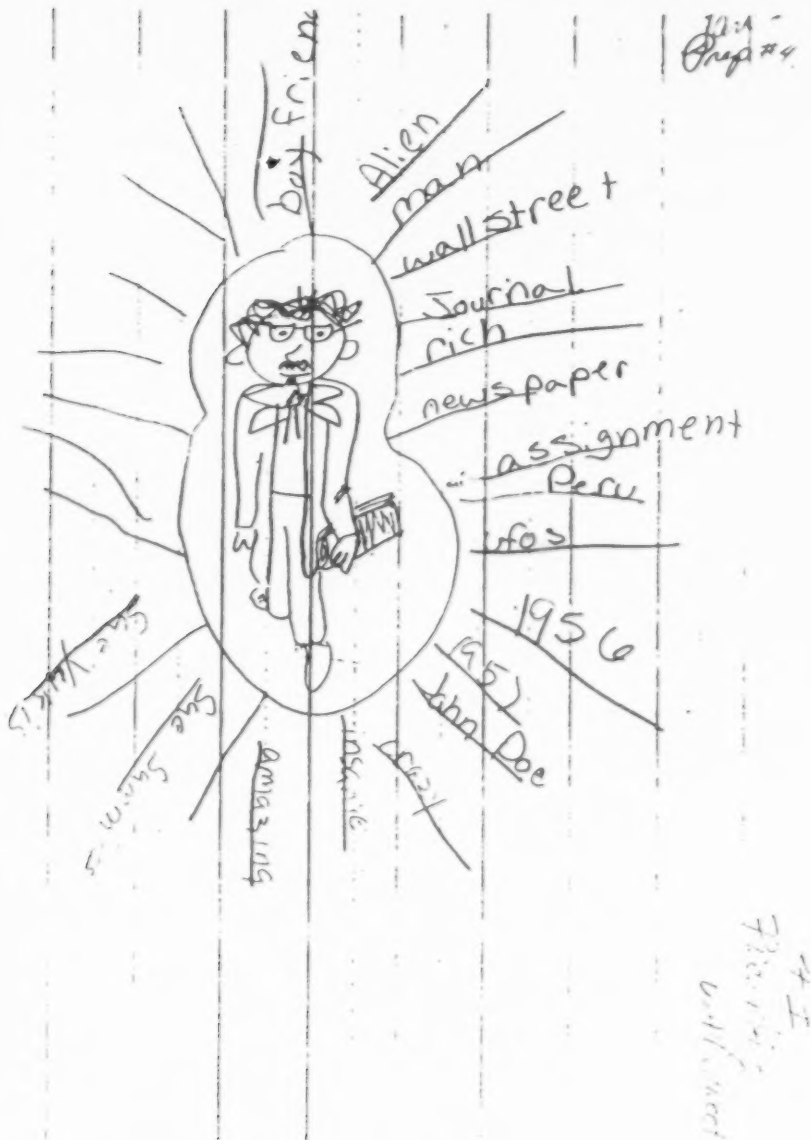
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3) The Saxon Jump	3
4) Christmas morning	4
5) ~~Fast~~ Show + Creeps	5
6) A day at the track	6 & 7
7) A mad man	8 & 9
8) The school girl	10 & 11
9) The deadly balloon	12 & 13
10) The wreck	14 & 15
11) The big race	16 & 17
12) The wall street mystery	18, 19, 20 & 21

STIMULUS PICTURE



BRAINSTORMING, CLUSTERING, MAPPING IDEAS



STORY - PART I

(Part I)

"The mystery of Wall Street"

— This is wall street. At least 40,000,000 people a day walk this street. Wall street is one of the busiest streets in New York.

— Mark Yukis has walked this street to work every ween day, since he was 23. He is now 36. Mark's father owns the Wall Street Journal.

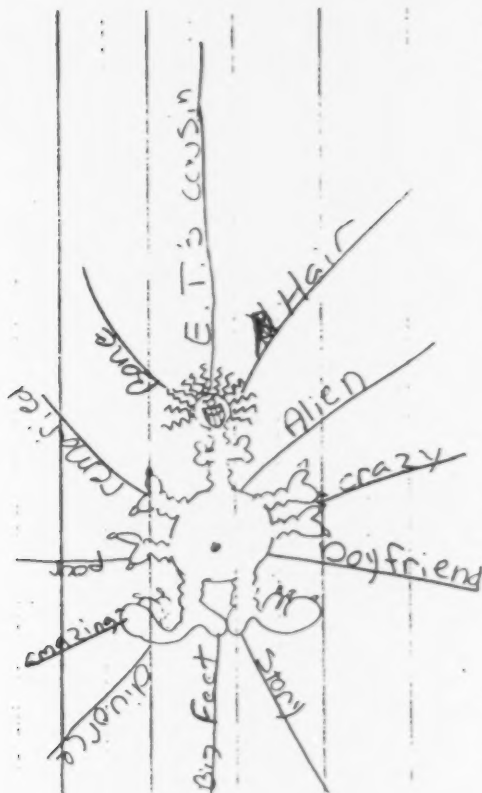
— Mark Yukis is the head person there since his father retired. Slowly Mark is becoming one of the richest people in New York, Thanks to his father. When his father dies Mark will inherit the buisness. Latelty, the big story Mark is working on is a mystery story in Peru about

— U.F.O's. LOTS OF PEOPLE THINK MARK YUKIS IS CRAZY.

— ONLY ONE PERSON BELIVES IN HIM. SHE IS SUE YUKIS. THAT IS MARK YUKIS' WIFE. MARK ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT SHE HAD ANOTHER HUSBAND. WHEN HE ASKED HER TO DO SOMETHING SHE WOULD SAY THAT SHE WAS BUSY. THEN ONE DAY WHEN MARK ASKED SHE TO GO TO THE MOVIES WITH HER, SHE

QID "THAT SHE WAS BUSY". SO HE DROVE DOWN THE STREET
AND PARKED IN AERTELLO'S DRIVE WAY. THEN HE WALKED BACK
TO THE HOUSE.

BRAINSTORMING - PART II OF STORY



Part II
 'A. & E. King'
 (all other)

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PART II OF STORY

Part II

He walked up to the porch and slowly opened the door. His wife was just as she was when he had left! "Why did you come back?" she said. Because I forgot my glasses," he answered. He quickly got them and pretended to leave. But instead of going to his car, he hid in the coat closet. An hour passed and nothing happened. Then at 10 after 7 Mark heard a knock at the door. His wife jumped up and opened the door. There was a strange man at the door that Mark had never seen before. But his wife seemed to know him. It was a bone necked man. But it was really wasn't a man it was a alien. Mark yanks jumped out of the closet and said, "That's why you believe in me". She said "I didn't know that you were here". "I know," he said. "I caught you and a crazy man," he said.

CONCLUSION

The alien said "??!!?...??~??". Mark said "What did he say?". He said, "You don't look too good your self". The alien jumped at Mark's ribs and threw him out. He said "and don't come back". So the alien and she lived happily ever after.

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